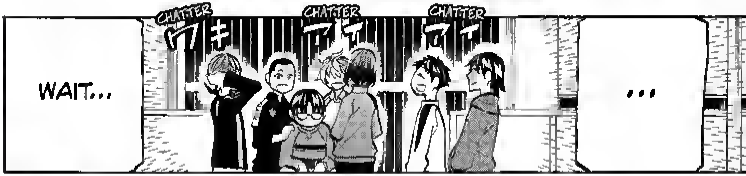
UAAA-RGH!
MY WHOLE BODY ACHES IN A GOOD WAY!
You sound like an old man
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
THAT'S GOOD! SOMETIMES YOU GOTTA WORK YOUR BODY!!
Only sometimes?
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
YAMATO!
THANKS FOR LENDING ME YOUR CLEATS AND SHIN GUARDS!
AND IT'S ALL THANKS...
...TO HER.

...
YOU'RE WELCOME.
I'LL WASH THEM BEFORE GIVING THEM BACK.
NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
HUH? BUT...
I HAVE TO WEAR THEM HOME.
HM? OH.
DON'T FORGET YOUR OWN CLEATS AND SHIN GUARDS NEXT TIME!
!
YOUR NAME IS NANASE, RIGHT?
I'M ROKURO MOROZUMI!
AND I'M HARUYOSHI KANEKO! NICE TO MEET YOU!

YOU PLAYED REALLY WELL! YOU'RE TOTALLY WELCOME ON HAMANISHI!
DID YOU PLAY SOCCER WHERE YOU USED TO LIVE?
Roku and Haru-yoshi!
UH... YEAH!
NICE TO MEET YOU TOO!

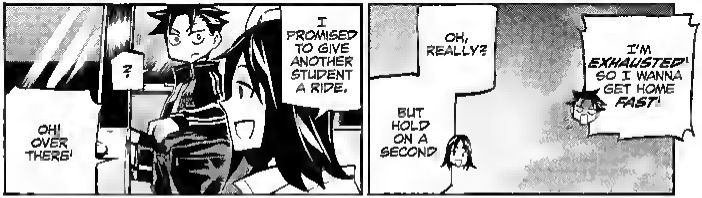

CHAPTER
CHAPTER
CHAPTER
WAIT...
...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU TWO WERE TOTALLY IN SYNC OUT THERE!
THE NOT-USED-TO TALKING-WITH GIRLS GROUP
IS SHE SERIOUSLY JOINING THE TEAM?
BOYS AND GIRLS ON THE SAME FIELD?

"NICE PASS, SOSHI."
"NICE SHOT, NANASE."

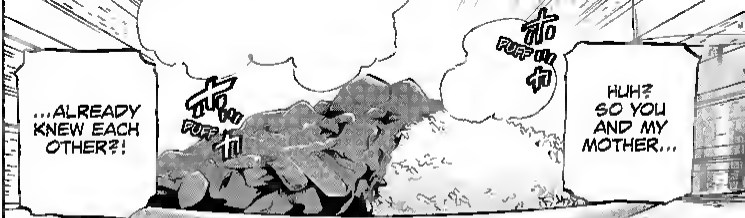
?
Hey, she's talking to you
GLOWER
ERM...
SOSHI...
HWIP
ABOUT EARLIER ...
SORRY. HE'S STILL JUST A KID.
UM... WHAT?
THAT GUY
PLEASE! CAN WE JUST PRETEND THAT GUY WASN'T ME?!
YASU!
GRIP
NOPE. WE CAN'T.
OKAY
ALL RIGHT, TEAM! YOUR PARENTS ARE HERE TO PICK YOU UP!
HEAD HOME BEFORE THE MONSTERS COME OUT!
VROOM
SKRRK
SKRRK

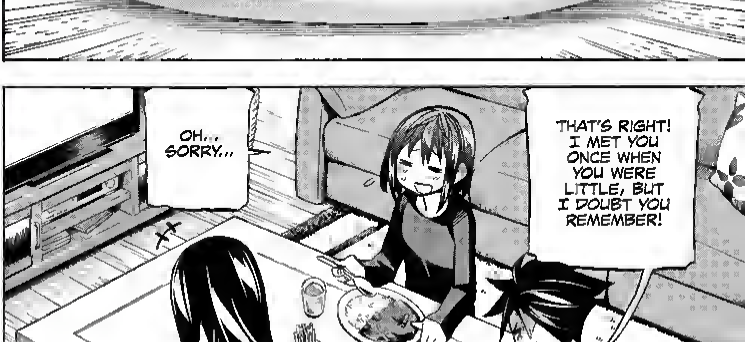
HEY, COACH! WHY DOES MY SON HAVE TISSUES STUCK IN HIS NOSE?!
MRS. YAMATO! I CAN EXPLAIN!
WHSH
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME, MOM! LET'S SCRAM!
HUH? WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
STOP, MOM! MY OWN INABILITY LED TO THIS TRAGEDY!
GYAAH
GYAAH

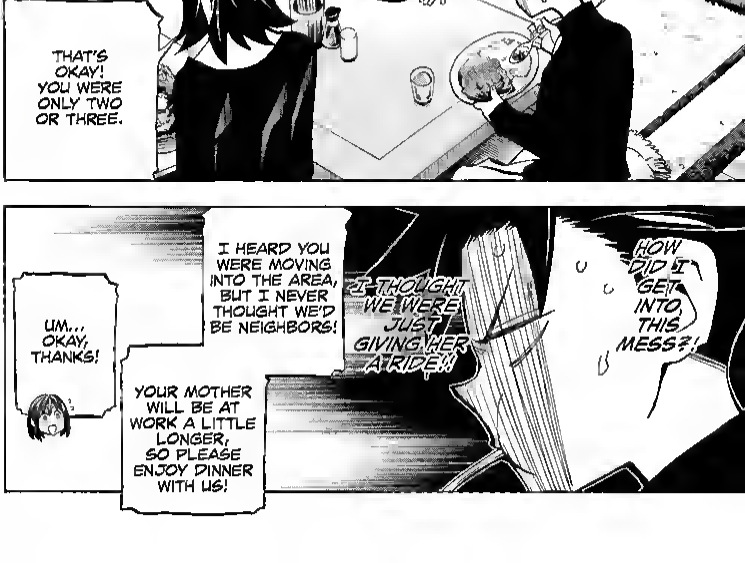

I PROMISED TO GIVE ANOTHER STUDENT A RIDE.
?
OH! OVER THERE!
OH, REALLY?
I'M EXHAUSTED! SO I WANNA GET HOME FAST!
BUT HOLD ON A SECOND

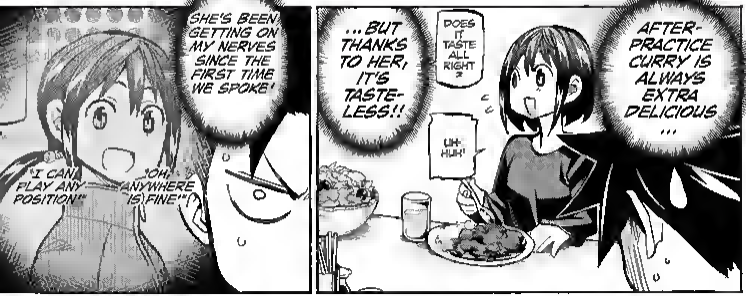
I'M SOSHI'S MOTHER.
YES? UM...
It's easy to spot a girl in this bunch!
YOUR FAMILY JUST MOVED IN TODAY, RIGHT?
AKIRA!
AKIRA NANASE!
?!
WE'RE ...
...YOUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGH-BORS!

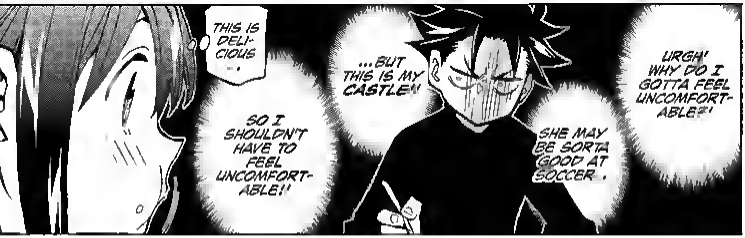
?!!!
...SO I'LL DRIVE YOU HOME!
I ALREADY SPOKE WITH YOUR MOTHER...
THANK YOU!
W...
...WHAAAT?!!
NO PROBLEM! SO LET'S GO!
Talk to her!
I expect a play-by-play
Don't worry. You'll get along fine.
PLING
I WISH THOSE GUYS WOULD SHUT UP!!


...ALREADY KNEW EACH OTHER?!
PUFF PUFF
HUH? SO YOU AND MY MOTHER...
PUFF PUFF


OH... SORRY...
THAT'S RIGHT! I MET YOU ONCE WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE, BUT I DOUBT YOU REMEMBER!
THAT'S OKAY! YOU WERE ONLY TWO OR THREE.


UM... OKAY, THANKS!
I HEARD YOU WERE MOVING INTO THE AREA, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D BE NEIGHBORS!
YOUR MOTHER WILL BE AT WORK A LITTLE LONGER, SO PLEASE ENJOY DINNER WITH US!
I THOUGHT WE WERE JUST GIVING HER A RIDE?!
HOW DID I GET INTO THIS MESS?!


SHE'S BEEN GETTING ON MY NERVES SINCE THE FIRST TIME WE SPOKE!
"I CAN PLAY ANY POSITION!"
"OH, ANYWHERE IS FINE!"
...BUT THANKS TO HER, IT'S TASTE-LESS!!
DOES IT TASTE ALL RIGHT?
UH-HUH!
AFTER-PRACTICE CURRY IS ALWAYS EXTRA DELICIOUS...


THIS IS DELI-CIOUS...
SO I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FEEL UNCOMFORT-ABLE!!
...BUT THIS IS MY CASTLE!!
SHE MAY BE SORTA GOOD AT SOCCER.
URGH! WHY DO I GOTTA FEEL UNCOMFORT-ABLE?!

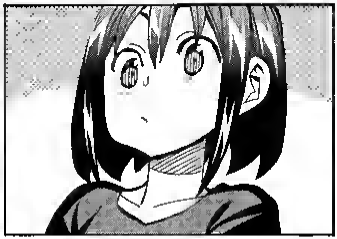
UM... THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL.
JUST LEAVE YOUR DISHES THERE!
CLINK CLINK
YOU CAN PLAY VIDEO GAMES OR SOMETHING IN SOSHI'S ROOM!
HWAH?!
MOM! TEA!!
I'M GONNA ACT LIKE NORMAL?!
DON'T BE DEMANDING! POUR IT YOURSELF!!
FWUP

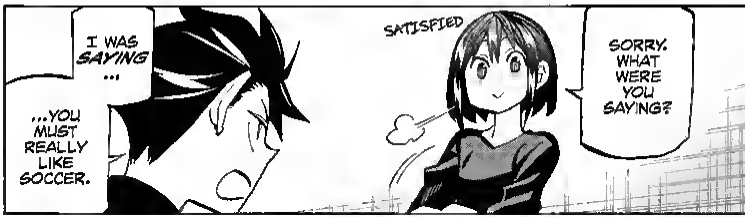
SOSHI'S ROOM
PARDON THE INTRUSION...
NICE ROOM...
YEAH, WHATEVER.
OH, THANKS!
HAVE A SEAT.
Anywhere
FLIP
I'LL TREAT HER JUST LIKE A BOY!
WOW...
WHY ON MY BED?!
IS SHE USED TO BEING IN BOYS' ROOMS?!
POMF
Why in my room?!
ARGH! COULDN'T MOM HAVE US HANG OUT IN THE LIVING ROOM?!
BUT I REFUSE TO LET HER UPSET MY COOL!

I DON'T SEE...
...MUCH SOCCER STUFF IN HERE.
キョロ
GLANCE
HUH?
What?
WELL, I'VE GOT A UNIFORM!
In my dresser...
I WAS IN A SOCCER CLUB BEFORE MOVING HERE.
OH, UH-HUH.
SOMETIMES THE TEAM WOULD HANG OUT AT ONE BOY'S HOUSE.
AND HIS WALLS...
I ASSUMED ALL BOYS WHO PLAY SOCCER...
...HAD ROOMS LIKE THAT!
ACTUALLY, MY ROOM WAS LIKE THAT TOO!
...I had posters of the national women's team.
...WERE COVERED IN POSTERS OF JAPAN'S NATIONAL ATHLETES AND SOCCER STARS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

SO, UH...
...YOU GUYS REALLY LIKE SOCCER, HUH?
THAT GUY AND, UM...
...YOU.

MY NAME IS...
...AKIRA A-SE.
RIGHT! NA-NASE!
NANASE! I GOT IT! MY BAD!
SHUF




SORRY. WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?
SATISFIED
I WAS SAYING ...
...YOU MUST REALLY LIKE SOCCER.

WELL...
...I DON'T HATE IT.

YOU PLAY SOCCER TOO...
...BUT YOU DON'T LIKE IT?

...I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT LOTS OF GUYS PLAY SOCCER.
THIS CITY? PREFEC-TURE? WELL...
BUT YOU KNOW... THIS AREA...
WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT, EVERYONE JUST FOLLOWS ALONG.
IT'S MORE POPULAR THAN BASE-BALL OR SWIMMING.
BUT I STARTED TWO YEARS AGO FOR NO PARTICULAR REASON AND I'LL PROBABLY KEEP PLAYING UNTIL I GRADUATE.
HMM... MAYBE.
AND YOU TOO?
I MEAN, YOU'RE CRAZY ABOUT SOCCER, SO...
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DOES THAT DISAPPOINT YOU?

SHE WANTS TO PLAY SO BAD SHE'LL EVEN JOIN BOYS...
BUT ON HAMANISHI FC...
...MOST OF THE GUYS ARE LIKE ME.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT!
I'M KINDA CRAZY ABOUT IT!
I MEAN ...
...YOU STILL COULD, YOU KNOW!
...IF YOU PLAYED ON A TEAM WITH MORE ENTHUSIASM AND SKILL?
SO WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER -?
YOUTH CLUBS ARE HARD FOR PARENTS...
...BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO DROP US OFF AND PICK US UP AND ATTEND GAMES.
AND A GOOD TEAM WOULD REQUIRE EVEN MORE EFFORT.
OOPS ...
URRM...
THAT SOUNDED LIKE I WAS PUSHING HER AWAY FROM THE TEAM!

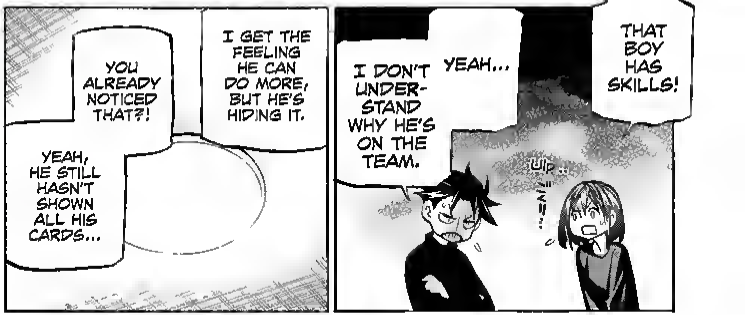
MOM IS BUSY WITH WORK...
...SO I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER HER.
THAT'S WHY I CHOSE TO OBSERVE HAMANISHI FC. IT'S THE CLOSEST CLUB.
MOM SAID SHE WOULD TAKE TIME OFF TO COME WITH ME...
...BUT I JUST WALKED ON MY OWN.
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
It was kind of far though.
HUH?! SHE'S WORRIED ABOUT HER MOM?!
DOING THAT STUFF IS A MOM'S JOB!
SO I'M FINE!
I DON'T NEED A STRONG TEAM!
I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE MY MOM TROUBLE.
I JUST WANT TO PLAY SOCCER!
WELL ...
...IF YOU SAY SO.
THIS GIRL...
...IS A LITTLE DIFFER-ENT.
SHE THINKS ABOUT THINGS.

WE HARDLY THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT ANYTHING...
...BUT SHE'S GONNA PLAY WITH US?
SHMP
...SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL QUITE RIGHT.
BUT I HAVE TO SAY..
YOU GUYS ARE PERFECT!
...I FEEL LUCKY!
ACTU-ALLY ...
IT'S PRETTY GOOD!
HAMA-NISHI FC!
YOUR TEAM ...

DON'T SAY THAT!
YOU HAVE LOTS OF POTEN-TIAL!
NO WAY!
HUUUH?! IT IS?!
THEN YOU CAN START NOW!
BUT WE NEVER WIN MATCHES!!
YEAH, WE GET ALONG WELL, BUT...
"WHAT I BELIEVED IN WAS ROKU!!"
SOSHI WILL REACH IT!
A SOFT PASS LIKE THAT WON'T WORK AGAINST ROKU
I LIKE HOW EVERYONE TRUSTS EACH OTHER!
AND YOU'RE SUPER FAST!
YEAH, I'M THE FASTEST ON THE TEAM, BUT...
WELL, HARUYOSHI'S GOOD ON DEFENSE, AND SHUN SCORES A LOT...
And, um—
YASU IS A TALL GOAL-KEEPER, SO HE CAN REACH DIFFICULT SHOTS.
I BET EVEN GUYS WHO DIDN'T PLAY MUCH THIS TIME HAVE STRENGTHS YOU'RE ALL AWARE OF!!

AND YAMATO'S KICKS ARE HUGE!
YAMATO? YEAH!
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON WE CHOSE HIM FOR CAPTAIN!
THE FIRST TIME COACH SAW YAMATO SHOOT, HE CALLED IT A WAVE CANNON!

AND ROKU...


THAT BOY HAS SKILLS!
YEAH...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE'S ON THE TEAM.
Uip
I GET THE FEELING HE CAN DO MORE, BUT HE'S HIDING IT.
YOU ALREADY NOTICED THAT?!
YEAH, HE STILL HASN'T SHOWN ALL HIS CARDS...

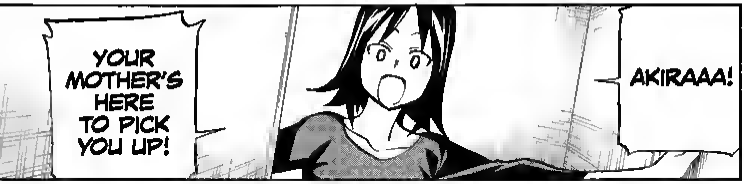
...BUT HE'S A GREAT GUY!

YEP!
I BET HE IS!
BEFORE I KNEW IT..
...WE WERE LOST IN CONVER-SATION.
...ABOUT THE TEAM...
...AND SHARED FUNNY STORIES.
WE TALKED ON AND ON...
HAH! THAT YAMATO GUY CRACKS ME UP!
Ah ha... Ha ha... Ha ha... My stomach hurts...
HE'S AN IDIOT!
AN IDIOT WHO GETS GOOD GRADES!

...YOU SAID..
...
SIGH
YEAH?
SOSHI?
AFTER I SCORED IN TODAY'S PRACTICE GAME...
...“ISN'T OUR TEAM JUST AWE-SOME?!”
OH, UH... DID I?
I JUST GOT CARRIED AWAY! WEIRD, HUH?
NO, IT WASN'T WEIRD!
WAP
BUSHHH
...AND IF IT'S GOOD, IT MUST BE STRONG!
IF YOU LIKE IT, IT MUST BE GOOD...
I REALIZED THAT WHILE WE WERE TALKING JUST NOW!
THAT'S HOW YOU REALLY FEEL!

I REALLY DO!
SO I WANNA JOIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

YOU'RE GONNA START COMING TO PRACTICE NEXT WEEK, RIGHT?
THEN YOU'RE ALREADY ONE OF US!

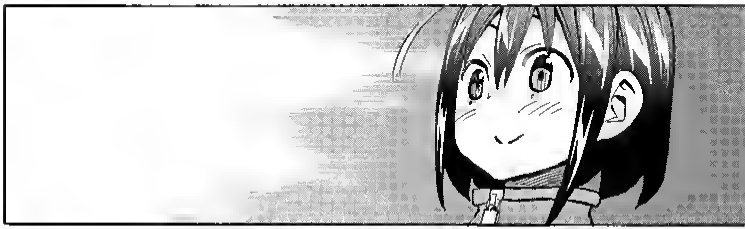

YOUR MOTHER'S HERE TO PICK YOU UP!
AKIRAAA!

STOMP
STOMP
IT SOUNDED LIKE YOU TWO WERE HAVING FUN!
STOMP
STOMP
AW, THAT WAS NUTHIN'!

TUMP
TUMP
TUMP
TUMP

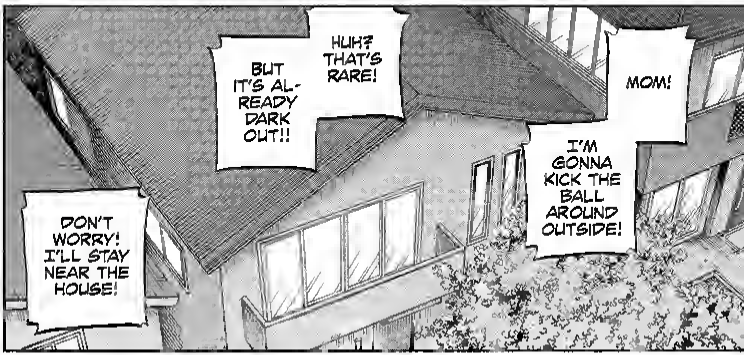
THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP AKIRA ...
... AND FOR FEEDING HER DINNER!
DON'T MENTION IT! NEXT TIME, YOU CAN HELP ME OUT! HA HA HA!
YES, OF COURSE! I'LL RETURN THE FAVOR!

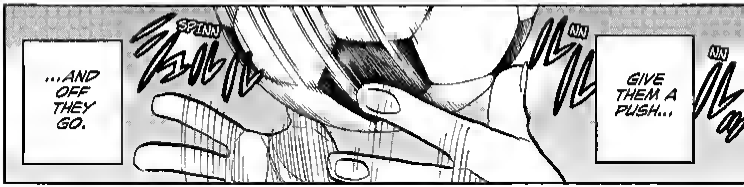
THANK YOU FOR THE CURRY!
Lucky you
IT WAS DELI-CIOUS!
COME AGAIN ANYTIME!



SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!
AT SOCCER...
...OKAY?
AKIRA IS A NICE GIRL.
AND SHE'S CUTE!
OH, SHE IS?
HMPH...
SIXTH GRADE BOYS ARE SO SIMPLE...
ROLL
コロ...

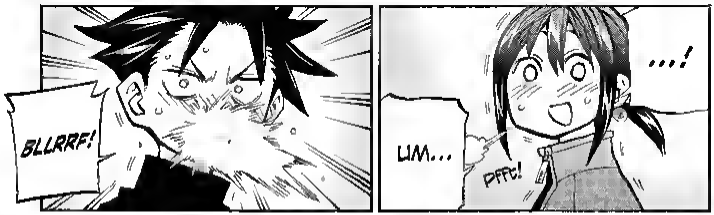
"IT'S PRETTY GOOD!"
"HAMA-NISHI FC!
"YOUR TEAM...

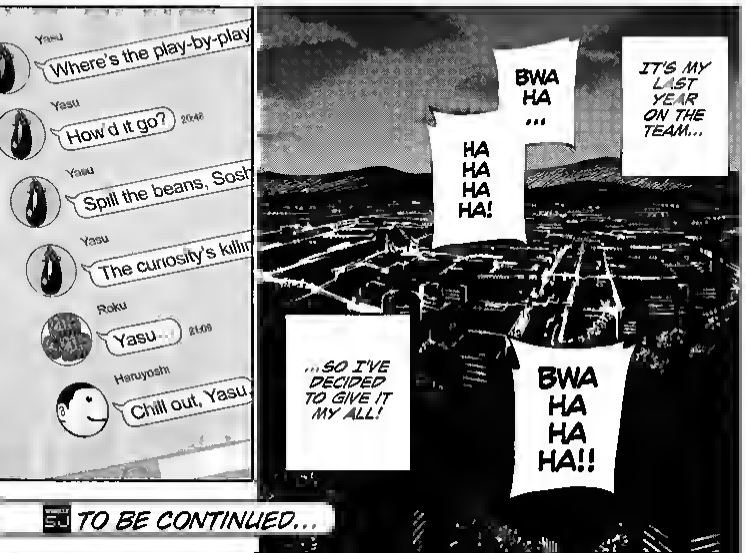

HUH? THAT'S RARE!
BUT IT'S AL-READY DARK OUT!!
MOM!
I'M GONNA KICK THE BALL AROUND OUTSIDE!
DON'T WORRY! I'LL STAY NEAR THE HOUSE!


...AND OFF THEY GO.
SPINN
NN
GIVE THEM A PUSH...
NN

HERE I GO!
NIHSH
BMP

HUH?
SPINNN





TO BE CONTINUED...

JUMP START!

SHUDAN!

BY TAKUMA YOKOTA

A TASTE OF WHAT'S NEW IN JAPAN

2: SATURDAY NIGHT CURRY